

Worksession

Agenda Item #	8
Meeting Date	September 22, 2008
Prepared By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager
Approved By	

Discussion Item	Proposal to Hire Interns for CSAFE Program to Conduct Ward 6 Outreach
Background	<p>The crime rates in Ward 6 of the City of Takoma Park have historically been higher than in other areas of the community. To date in calendar year 2008, 31.3 percent of the Part 1 offenses (homicide, rape, robbery, assault, auto theft, and larceny) that have occurred in the City of Takoma Park took place in Ward 6. It has also experienced over 70 percent of certain Part II offenses (including controlled and dangerous substance violations, driving under the influence, disorderly conduct, trespassing, open alcohol container violations, and urinating in public) that have occurred in the City since January 1, 2008.</p> <p>In the 2007 Resident Survey conducted by the City of Takoma Park, residents were asked to express their opinion on a variety of issues. When asked to rate the overall quality of life in their neighborhood, the average rating of Ward 6 residents was 52 (0=poor, 100= excellent)—the lowest of the City’s six wards. By comparison, the rating of Ward 1 residents was 76.</p> <p>The 2007 Resident Survey also asked respondents about their feelings of safety, including in the University/New Hampshire/Crossroads area located in Ward 6. Only 19 percent of <u>all</u> City residents felt “very” or “somewhat” safe in this area when walking along after dark. This statistic alone corroborates that there is a troubling perception of crime that plagues part of the Ward 6 community.</p> <p>In light of these problems, Ward 6 Councilmember Doug Barry asked staff to develop a strategy to prevent crime and improve communication between all Ward 6 community stakeholders. The proposal, prepared by Mary Kendall, Director of the Maryland International Corridor CSAFE Program, contemplates the hiring of two interns to conduct outreach to the Ward 6 neighborhood, including long-term residents, transient residents, and the business community. The interns would be trained to communicate to the community via fliers, newsletters, door-knocking, community events, and community meetings. The goal of this outreach effort would be to increase community involvement from Ward 6 in police and other City government activities. Key community partners would be the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority, the Takoma Park Police Department, and other City departments.</p>
Policy	<p>The City Council determines how City funds are expended and the services to be provided by the City government or others on its behalf.</p> <p>The City Council is interested in the safety and security of City residents and in their engagement in community matters.</p>
Fiscal Impact	<p>The projected cost of the proposed Ward 6 initiative is approximately \$30,000.</p> <p>If approved by the Council, a funding source for the project would need to be identified. The amount of the unappropriated reserve is \$390,499.</p>

Attachments	<p>Proposal to the City of Takoma Park Council regarding the funding of an internship program prepared by Mary Kendall, Director of the Maryland International Corridor CSAFE Program</p> <p>Excerpts from the 2007 Takoma Park Resident Survey</p>
Recommendation	<p>Staff recommends that the Council consider the proposal to conduct outreach in Ward 6 and determine if it wishes to go forward with its implementation.</p>
Special Consideration	<p>The revitalization of the New Hampshire Avenue corridor has been a priority of the City Council for several years. Crime problems can hinder revitalization efforts.</p>

**PROPOSAL TO THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK COUNCIL FOR FUNDING AN INTERNSHIP
PROGRAM FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT**

Submitted To: Doug Barry

Prepared By: Mary Kendall, Maryland International Corridor CSAFE Program Director

Date Submitted: June 15, 2008

*Partner Organizations: Takoma Park Police Department, Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority
Inc., Maryland International Corridor CSAFE, Stout and Teague*

**PROPOSAL TO DOUG BARRY, CITY COUNCIL MEMBER, WARD 6:
FUNDING AN INTERN PROGRAM FOCUSED ON OUTREACH, CRIME PREVENTION AND
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

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PROJECT SUMMARY

The Ward 6 community is in need of additional services from the City of Takoma Park. Crime rates are higher than any other City Ward and there is minimal communication between residents, businesses and the City government. It has a distressing perception of crime by all City of Takoma Park residents. There is a great need for additional crime prevention efforts that can complement the existing Maryland International Corridor CSAFE Program.

Simple, yet time consuming steps can be taken to prevent crime and improve communication between all Ward 6 community stakeholders. A targeted effort focused on education, awareness and community involvement should be undertaken to improve the Ward 6 community. Through outreach efforts, the community can be re-engaged and made aware of the services available to them.

To complete the needed steps, the CSAFE Program would hire two interns to conduct outreach to the Ward 6 neighborhood, including long-term residents, transient residents and the business community. The interns would be trained to communicate to the community via fliers, newsletters, door-knocking, community events and community meetings. The goal of this outreach effort would be to increase community involvement from Ward 6 in police and city government activities. Success would be measured by the number of new residents that join a local community group or citizen's committee or by the number of new community improvement activities implemented and the number of community stakeholders involved. The key community partners would be the Maryland International Corridor CSAFE Program, Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority Inc., Takoma Park Police Department and the City of Takoma Park government.

PROJECT NEED

The crime rates in the City of Takoma Park, Ward 6 are higher than any other Ward. It has 31.3% of the Part I offenses (homicide, rape, robbery, assault, auto theft and larceny) that have occurred in the City of Takoma to date since January 1, 2008, followed by Ward 3 with 19.5%. Ward 6 also has over 70% of the more serious Part II offenses (including controlled and dangerous substance violations, driving under the influence, disorderly conduct, trespassing, open alcohol container violations and urinating in public) that have occurred in the City since January 1, 2008.

Many of these crimes could be prevented through outreach, education and most importantly, reestablishing the community-police partnership that at one time was strong in this neighborhood. Due to the population, cultural and residential changes in the Ward, the gap in communication between all services of the City government and this neighborhood has widened, leaving the community to feel isolated and disconnected.

According to the 2007 Survey conducted by the City of Takoma Park, Ward 6 has the lowest quality of life rating out of all City Wards. It also has the lowest percentage (less than 50%) of people feeling unsafe walking alone at night. In fact, the percentages of people feeling safe at night in the University/New Hampshire/Crossroads area (a sub-neighborhood of Ward 6) are drastically lower than any other area in the City of Takoma Park (only 19% of all city residents feel safe or somewhat safe walking alone at night in the University/New Hampshire/Crossroads sub-neighborhood). This statistic alone corroborates that there is a troubling perception of crime that has plagued parts of the Ward 6 community.

Also according to the survey, residents in Ward 6 were most concerned about:

- Oversized commercial vehicles parked in the street
- Pedestrian safety
- Crime
- Graffiti
- Litter
- Run down houses and buildings
- Overgrown grass and vegetation

Other resolvable issues in this Ward that contribute to the high crime rate and perception of crime in the neighborhood and how they could be addressed with an internship program include:

- Residents distrust the police – In many instances, residents are unwilling to cooperate and/or communicate with the police for various reasons, ergo, criminal cases remain unsolved, crimes remain under-reported and police are unaware of community crime concerns. The interns will work with CSAFE staff, community groups, property managers, businesses, church groups and the police to educate residents of the importance of reporting crime and communicating with the police so that all crime-concerns are addressed. Essentially, such work will result in strong community-police relationships.
- Little individual knowledge of how to prevent crime and improve public safety – Ward 6 is a significantly diverse community. Various types of crime prevention education are needed to improve public safety. Some Ward 6 residents are recently arrived immigrants and are completely unfamiliar with local laws and resources. They carry large amounts of cash in their pockets and become victims of street robberies. The interns will work with CSAFE staff to both educate and bring resources to the community so that residents, business owners and employees and visitors will learn how to avoid becoming a victim and also, learn the local laws and where to go for help when in need of assistance.
- Increase in gang activity – Community members and some local businesses are being extorted. Graffiti signs on buildings, playgrounds, road signs and apartment buildings are creeping into the community. Youth are recruited into gangs at the young ages of 9 – 14. There is a great need for the community to become aware of this problem and know how to respond to it. To address this need, the interns along with CSAFE staff will facilitate information-sharing and problem-solving meetings with community groups and governmental agencies so that this need can be brought to the table and collaboratively addressed. The interns will focus on coordinating graffiti prevention and removal activities.
- Alcohol abuse and public intoxication – Many times, Ward 6 community members become victims and suspects of robberies and assaults due to alcohol abuse and drinking in public. When intoxicated, they become instant targets of a criminal attack. The interns, with the support of CSAFE staff will provide education about why not to drink in public and information about resources available to help those in need.
- Little knowledge of local community resources – Both residents and community stakeholders are often times unaware of the resources available to improve their health, safety and welfare. The interns and CSAFE staff will assist residents in identifying and taking advantage of those resources through individual outreach and the publication of a newsletter that ties together the business and residential communities.
- Little sense of community – There is a great need for an increase in community involvement in the Ward 6 community. More businesses need to be involved in the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority Inc. The New Hampshire Gardens Civic Association, once a strong organization, now has low membership. City government committees have minimal participation from this area of the City. No one really feels as if they belong to a particular community. The interns will assist CSAFE Staff and other partner organizations in bridging the gap between the City government and the community and also to plan community events and community building activities.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGIES

DESIRED OUTCOMES “What do we hope to achieve?”	METHODOLOGY “How will we achieve it?”	PERFORMANCE MEASURES “How will we know if we are successful?”
Increase the amount of trust that Ward 6 residents have in local police and other governmental agencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate and facilitate meetings between residents, police, stakeholders, property managers. 2. Coordinate community events and encourage police attendance 3. Implement educational campaigns about crime reporting, crime prevention, public safety and local laws 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of meetings and community events and no. of individuals in attendance 2. No. of hours of police participation 3. No. of calls for service made by residents (expect an increase) 4. No. of suspects developed based on community info.
Increase the number of community members involved in neighborhood and city activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and engage interested community members 2. Create opportunities for community involvement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of new members to police department list serve and neighborhood committees 2. No. of opportunities for involvement
Increase the number of proactive residents that are concerned about their community improvement, crime prevention and safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate and provide safety and prevention education to community 2. Publicize crime prevention tips 3. Work with community groups to develop crime prevention plans and Neighborhood Watches 4. Coordinate community response to crime trends in specific neighborhoods 5. Identify and support local leaders 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of new projects address crime-related issues or quality of life 2. No. of new residents that participate in events and meetings 3. No. of Neighborhood Watches established 4. Decrease in certain crimes, such as citizen robberies, as a result of crime prevention education
Improve the exchange of information between the CDA, businesses, police and city government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create and distribute newsletter to businesses and residents 2. Gather and disseminate information to/from police, City, business associations and business owners and residents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qualitative indicator: Those who receive the information will have the opportunity to determine its usefulness

PROJECTED BUDGET

Line Item	Cost Per Item/Hour	No. of Items/Hours	Total	Budget Notes
Intern 1	\$16	570	\$9120	One-year internship with time off around semester breaks – Approximately 15 hours/week at 38 weeks (15x38x16=9120)
Intern 2	\$16	570	\$9120	Same calculation as above. Two interns are needed since over 50% of their time will be dedicated to outreach in the community. For safety and liability reasons, there should be two interns.
Uniform – Polo Shirts	\$25	6	\$150	The interns will wear polo shirts with a logo so that they are easily identifiable in the community
Mileage Reimbursement	.505	1140	\$575.70	Interns may drive up to 15 miles per week in the community and to/from the City Building (15x2x38=1140)
Community Events/Workshops	350	5	\$1750	Interns will work with CSAFE staff to coordinate different community events, activities and workshops – Funds will be used for event and workshop supplies (the cost per workshop will vary. 350 was used as an average)
Crime Prevention Tools	4000	1	4000	Funds will be used to purchase magnets, whistles, ankle wallets, mini-lights. Any kinds of supplies that can be used by residents for crime prevention purposes.
Printing and Mailing Costs	5000	1	5000	Funds will be used to cover the costs of printing cartridges, paper and postage for the production of newsletters and other educational materials
TOTAL			\$29,715.70	